

FIRE

The mission of the Fire Department is to minimize the loss of life and property resulting from fires, medical emergencies and other disasters through prevention, education and fire suppression activities.



Overview

The Department provides fire suppression and emergency response from 18 stations strategically located throughout Wichita. The Department is organized into two Divisions: Operations and Administration.

In addition to administrative staff officed at City Hall, the Department operates a training facility. On average, 18 recruits are trained annually, as well as continuously refreshing and updating the training and preparedness of all fire suppression staff. Maintenance of fire apparatus is coordinated through a central maintenance facility.

The Department maintains a four-member Arson Investigation unit, which investigates all suspicious fires. Arson investigators also assist in the inspection function, along with three other inspector positions. Three additional positions are dedicated to public education and prevention.

Finance and Operations

The 2001 and 2002 budgets for the Fire Department are financed entirely from the General Fund. During this budget period, the Fire Department will begin a series of staffing enhancements, directly tied to the 9-year station relocation project approved by the City Council in 2000. The enhancements include ten new positions in 2002 and 17 more in 2003.

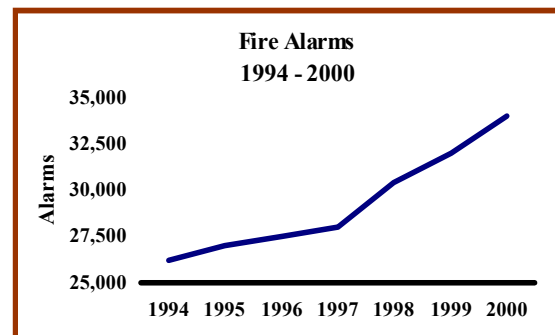
The relocation of six stations is projected in 2002 and 2003, with a new station projected to open in mid – 2003.

In the 2001 ñ 2010 CIP, \$14.5 million is included to comprehensively re-locate fire stations, and to construct two new stations. The moves will allow the Fire Department to adequately service newly annexed areas, while enhancing the responsiveness to existing citizens. Over thirty years, the capital investment in station relocation and construction is expected to save over \$30 million in operating costs.

The relocation of six stations is projected in 2002 and 2003, with a new station projected to open in mid ñ 2003. Seventeen additional fire suppression staff are included in the 2003 Budget to staff the new station. On an outlook of a longer term, 17 additional firefighters will be required in 2007 with the addition of another new station.

The Fire Operations budget includes over \$22 million for wages for the 360 front line firefighters who provide 24-hour emergency response to City residents from a network of 18 stations. Firefighters respond to nearly 34,000 alarms each year, including 1,730 fires and almost 21,300 medical alarms. In recent years, alarm volume has increased significantly, primarily in the area of medical calls.

Fire Operations. The majority of the Fire Department resources are focused on fire suppression and medical





response activities. The services are provided by fire staff located at stations throughout Wichita. Currently, there are 18 stations, with additional stations planned in 2003 and 2007. In addition, the strategic relocation of eight stations will provide optimum response time. Each station is generally staffed with 5 firefighters and two pieces of equipment, a quick response vehicle and a fire engine. At battalion stations, additional fire engines are staffed. Aerials and tenders are available at five stations, utilizing cross staffing to man the equipment.

Three Battalion Chiefs provide direct supervision to Operations staff.



Fire suppression staff respond to over 1,550 fires annually. Approximately 90 percent of the fires are confined to the room of origin.

Performance of the fire suppression staff is measured in a variety of ways. Response time is maintained at a reasonable level through the number and location of stations, and by fully staffing fire stations. Funding for overtime and holiday pay is necessary based upon the current number of positions needed to staff 18 stations 24 hours a day. The budget includes over \$1.2 million for overtime and holiday pay.

Fire suppression staff are actively involved in the neighborhoods surrounding the stations. Staff

often provide station tours, give safety presentations and participate in neighborhood block parties. As part of a neighborhood outreach effort, free blood pressure screenings are provided and firefighters often are invited to and participate in neighborhood events.

The Fire Department maintains a hazardous materials team and specialty rescue teams, including a heavy rescue team, a high angle rescue team, and a water rescue team. In recent years, events such as the DeBruce Elevator explosion, the Baby Jesse well rescue, the tornados of the recent past years, and the West Wichita floods have highlighted a need for enhanced rescue equipment and training. The needs have been addressed by earmarking equipment replacement funds for rescue team needs.

While response time is important, appropriate and well-maintained equipment is also necessary to improve the percentage of fires contained to room of origin, and the average dollar loss per fire. The budget continues the initiative to replace hoses and nozzles on a ten-year replacement program to ensure reliability. The budget also continues the ladder replacement program, in which all of the Department's field ladders will be modernized. Currently, fire staff are evaluating options to upgrade the department's breathing apparatus, to enhance safety for fire suppression staff.

The 2002 budget includes funding for ten additional firefighters to enhance the staffing of fire equipment. Specifically, the

Selected Performance Measures -Operations				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Average response time (min)	4.03	4.24	4.1	4.1
Percent of fires contained to room of origin	90%	95%	90%	90%
Average dollar loss per fire in thousands	\$4.20	\$6.50	\$5.00	\$5.00
Number of blood pressure screenings	14,138	12,248	14,000	14,000

additional positions will enable the staffing of four aerial companies in lieu of the current practice. Aerial apparatus are typically dispatched to large fires, including building fires.

Currently, aerial apparatus are cross-staffed by squad crews. As a component of the fire station relocation and the consultant's report, it was recommended that aerials be staffed full time. With additional staffing dedicated to the aerials, response times for these apparatus will improve.

Ten additional firefighters are included in 2002 to reduce aerial truck response time.

Vehicle Maintenance. The Fire Department maintains a staff of three mechanics and one civilian supervisor to maintain its fleet of 53 apparatus and various support vehicles. Smaller compact sedans are maintained by

Central Fleet Maintenance, rather than the Fire Vehicle Maintenance crew. Fire apparatus maintenance is performed in a Fire Maintenance facility centrally located near downtown. In a joint venture with Sedgwick County Fire District 1, two County staff work with City staff to maintain fire equipment and to capitalize on economies of scale and cross-utilization. The County reimburses the City for all County-related expenditures.

The Fire Maintenance section was streamlined in 2001 with the consolidation of building maintenance in Public Works (including the transfer of one position). In addition, hydrant maintenance was consolidated in the Water Department, implemented by transferring one position from the Fire Department to the Water Department.

Arson Investigation. Four investigator positions are budgeted at a cost of over \$260,000, including one Captain and three Lieutenants. The positions are scheduled to provide on-duty coverage, primarily during daylight hours. Fire Operations staff often supplement case investigation. Annually Arson staff investigate around 350 fires and make around 30 arrests. In the past, the conviction rate for cases tried has been over 90 percent. Arson investigators determine causation on an average of 69 fires annually, each. Each investigator makes an average of 5.5 arrests annually.

Safety and Training. Six commissioned positions attached to Fire Operations perform safety officer and training functions for the Department. The positions include three Captains on 24-hour shifts and three 40-hour employees. Safety Officers are dispatched to every fire and major accident, and direct the response

Selected Performance Measures - Arson				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Fires determined to be of suspicious nature	114	94	100	100
Fires investigated	283	276	300	300
Fires investigated per investigator per year	71	69	75	75
Arrests	25	22	22	22
Conviction rate	98%	90%	90%	90%
Arrests per investigator per year	6.3	5.5	5.5	5.5



Fire apparatus, including a squad truck and aerial, on the scene of a two-alarm structure fire.

Each arson investigator determines causation on an average of 69 fires per year.



of fire crews to ensure firefighter safety. One position is dedicated to airpack and other equipment maintenance and certification, while another coordinates medical training and quality control. In addition, the safety and training staff are responsible for fire recruit training and for developing drill training. In 2001, safety and training staff were consolidated at Station One.

Prevention. The budget funds nine positions dedicated to public education and inspections functions. Fire Operations staff heavily supplement the inspection function, performing over 80 percent of the inspections. Likewise, the public education role is supplemented by Operations staff with station tours, smoke detector installation and other activities. In addition, prevention staff coordinate with inspectors from the Office of Central Inspection to review plans examination and sprinkler design. In 2001, three positions were shifted from Fire to OCI to enhance the efficiency of this area.

Selected Performance Measures - Prevention				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Fires per 1,000 pop.	4.34	5.08	4	4
Building inspections	3,234	3710	3,000	3,000

Administration. The Fire Chief and seven civilian personnel handle the administrative oversight of the department. A civilian Assistant to the Chief is responsible for monitoring budgetary compliance, purchasing, soliciting grants, supervising payroll functions and providing general support to the Chief. The administration of the Firehouse software system is performed in the administration section, with support from the staff of Information Technology. Firehouse was implemented in 2000, replacing an antiquated system used to log alarm call information. The new system has the capability to integrate call data, fleet maintenance and inspection data into one centralized system.

Fire Department Budget Summary					
	2000 Actual	2001 Adopted	2001 Revised	2002 Adopted	2003 Approved
Personal Services	21,368,388	22,144,480	22,159,700	23,683,650	24,624,610
Contractual Services	951,376	976,680	1,110,170	1,113,680	1,119,330
Commodities	607,755	624,430	578,350	606,420	612,410
Capital Outlay	120,482	45,720	45,720	48,220	45,720
Other	0	7,130	0	0	0
Total General Fund Expenditures	23,048,001	23,798,440	23,893,940	25,451,970	26,402,070
Domestic Preparedness Grant	99,930	0	0	0	0
General Fund	22,948,071	23,798,440	23,893,940	25,451,970	26,402,070
Total Fire Department Resources	23,048,001	23,798,440	23,893,940	25,451,970	26,402,070
Total commissioned positions	371	371	370	380	380
Total civilian positions	14	14	13	13	13
Total FTE positions	385	385	383	393	393